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An analysis of Politeness Strategies in Indonesian English Textbooks

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Abstract

The research aimed explores politeness approaches in EFL textbooks, especially Indonesian English textbooks. There were two textbooks which analysed as the sample for this study. The textbooks entitled "Talk Active 1" and "Talk Active 2: Language and Culture Programme". The researcher limited the analysis on the dialogs which provided as materials in the textbooks. Brown & Levinson's (1987) politeness strategies were applied to categorize the data. The researcher applied content analysis method proposed by Denscombe, (2010) as the research method. The results of the study revealed bald on-record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off-record were reflected in the Indonesian English textbooks. Both types of bald on-record strategies were found in the Indonesian English textbooks. However, there were only three types of off-records strategies were reflected in the textbooks. The finding revealed 11 types of positive politeness as strategy follows: S1: Notice, attend to hearer; S2: Exaggerate, S3: Intensify interest to hearer; S4: Use in-group identity markers; S6: Avoid disagreement; S7: Presuppose/assert/raise common ground; S8: Joke; S10: Offer, promise; S12: Include both speaker and hearer in the activity; S13: Give (or ask for) reasons; S14: assume or assert reciprocity. The result also presented 8 types of negative politeness as follows: S1: Be conventionally indirect; S2: Question, hedge; S3: Be pessimistic; S4: Minimize the imposition; S5: Give deference; S6: Apologize; S7: Impersonalize speaker and hearer and S10: Go on record as incurring a debt, or as not indebteding hearer. The analysis showed positive and negative politeness strategies were central strategies that reflected in the textbooks. It proved that Indonesian English textbooks have pragmatics input for the students.

Keywords: Politeness Strategies; EFL Textbooks; Content Analysis; Indonesian English Textbooks; Pragmatics

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1. Introduction

In this digital era, teaching and learning language is not only emphasizing about grammatical knowledge and fluency anymore, but it is important to raise student's awareness of pragmatics knowledge. Since language has vital function of

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exchanging meaning in communication (Gholami, 2015; Yetty, 2018). Pragmatics competence refers to foreign language learner's ability to deal with interpreting meaning that communicated and interpreted by other people socially and culturally accurate. Pragmatic competence included as one of the principal in communicative competence (Kurdghelashvili, 2015; Savvidou & Kogetsidis, 2019). Additionally, politeness is conversational key derives under pragmatics (Bhise, 2015). It means that politeness is one of the important pragmatic aspects in communication that has to teach to the students. Teaching politeness strategies in the classroom can be said as the effort of raising student's pragmatic knowledge.

Politeness is pragmatic instrument that have varieties structure (including non-verbal structures) that functioned to recognize how speech acts are used to achieve communication goals smoothly (Brown & Levinson, 1987; García-Fuentes & McDonough, 2018; Harooni & Pourdana, 2017). Teaching politeness strategies to the students can encourage student's interpersonal communication, so the students have awareness of maintaining good interpersonal relationship is not only about pleasing each other but respecting too (Adel, Davoudi, & Ramezanzadeh, 2016; Flores-Salgado & Castineira-Benitez, 2018; Kavanagh, 2016; Li, 2012; Maros & Rosli, 2017; Schneider, Nebel, Pradel, & Rey, 2015; Tsakona, 2016). In Indonesia, politeness strategies have been the issue in the English language classroom context. For instance, Agustina & Cahyono, (2016) examined the authority of relations and politeness strategies in the English foreign language classroom communications. The result revealed that the Indonesian students expected polite expression from their lecture. The words such as *thank you*, *sorry*, and *please* is considered more encouraging and appreciating.

Erlinda & Rahmi, (2015) analyzed positive politeness that used by Indonesian teacher in English classroom context based on Brown & Levinson's (1987) theory. The investigation revealed six types of positive politeness strategies used by the teacher in the classroom interactions. The strategies are strategy 2: exaggerating interest, approval, sympathy to the hearer; strategy 4: using in-group identity marker; strategy 5: seeking agreement; strategy 10: offering, promising; strategy 12: including both speaker and hearer in activity, and strategy 13: giving or asking for reason. Nurmawati, Haryanto, (2018) also revealed six types of teacher's positive politeness strategies that promoted an effective classroom interactions. The strategies are strategy 1: noticing, attend to hearer; strategy 3: intensifying interest to hearer; strategy 4: use uniqueness marker; strategy 6: avoid disagreements, strategy 7: raise common grounds; and strategy 12: including both speaker and hearer in activity.

Arif, Iskandar, Muliati, & Patak, (2018) investigated politeness strategies practiced during the learning process differentiated by their gender. The research revealed that male lecture usually used positive and negative politeness strategies, and female lecture preferred to use bald on-record strategies to interact with the students. Moreover, Putri, Ermanto, Manaf, & Abdurahman, (2019) examined student's politeness strategies to ask and answer questions during the discussions in the learning process. The research is implemented in Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri (MTsN) Baring Rano-rano, Padang, Indonesia. The study discovered that the learners implemented negative politeness strategies to ask questions about complex matters, and the learners implemented positive politeness strategies to answer questions which the matters are not sensitive and containing of information. Then, Mahmud,

(2019) also examined students politeness strategies in classroom, but it was in university context. The result showed that the learners applied positive and negative politeness strategies during the classroom interactions.

In fact, the elements of Indonesian national curriculum supported pragmatics teaching in the classroom. It means that the effort of the teachers in teaching pragmatic awareness in the English classroom is expected to have great anxiety (Adyagarini, Lestari, & Munir, 2019). The textbook is assumed as one of a tool to introduce pragmatics knowledge to the students. Since textbook has the central role in language teaching as the main reference which provide various materials, activities, language input that appropriate with student's needs (Ahmadi & Derakhshan, 2016; Alshumaimeri, 2015; Ebadi & Hasan, 2016; Emilia, Moecharam, & Syifa, 2017; Farashaiyan, Tan, & Sahragard, 2018; Laabidi & Nfissi, 2016; Mofidi, 2018; Muhsen Al Harbi, 2017; Su, 2014). English foreign language textbooks afforded foreign language learners with pragmatic contents which reflected in the form of speech acts such as apologizing, refusing, and requesting (Meihami & Khanlarzadeh, 2015). Besides, Gholami, (2015) found that politeness strategies were implicitly reflected in the Iranian English textbooks regarding of speech acts. Shooshtari, Bordbar, & Banari, (2017) also found that politeness strategies were reflected in ESP textbooks since it was a vital component in communication. Then, Alcoberes, (2016) found negative politeness in the Indonesian English textbooks. Its conclusion, textbooks are not only put speech acts as the pragmatic input but also reflected politeness strategies as a part of pragmatic knowledge that has to aware by the students.

Regarding the central role of textbook in English language teaching and language input for student's communications, the researcher intends to investigate politeness strategies in Indonesian English textbooks based on Brown & Levinson's (1987) theory. Since politeness strategies have a significant role in the communication successfulness and the issue of politeness in Indonesian English textbooks seems to need a concern. So, the researcher generates a research question as follows: (1) what are the types of politeness strategies reflected in the dialogue in Indonesian English textbooks?

2. Related Theory

Brown and Levinson (1987) proposed four types of politeness strategies as follows:

a. Bald On-record.

The bald on-record strategy focused on clearness and effectiveness (Sülü, 2015). This strategy divided into two kinds as follow: (1) Cases of non-minimization of the face threat. It is where the face is disregarded or irrelevant; (2) Cases of FTA-oriented bald on-record usage. It is where speakers decrease the face threat by suggestion.

b. Positive Politeness

Positive politeness is a direct action that appreciates the hearer, so the hearer feels that the speaker and the hearer have similar interest (Chen, 2017). Positive politeness allocated into fifteen strategies as follows: (1) Notice, attending to the hearer; (2) Exaggerating, (3) Intensifying interest to hearer; (4) Using in-group

identity markers; (5) Seeking agreement; (6) Avoiding agreement; (7) Raising common ground; (8) Joking; (9) Asserting speaker's knowledge of and concerning for hearer's wants; (10) Offering and promising; (11) Being optimistic; (12) Including both speaker and hearer in the activity; (13) Giving or asking for reason, (14) Assuming reciprocity; (15) Giving gifts to hearer.

c. Negative Politeness

Negative politeness is concerned with the speaker's negative face, it established chariness and aloofness (Mulyono, Amalia, & Suryoputro, 2019). Negative politeness divided into ten strategies as follows: (1) Being conventionally indirect; (2) Questioning and hedging; (3) Being pessimistic; (4) Minimizing the imposition; (5) Giving deference; (6) Apologizing; (7) Impersonalizing speaker and hearer; (8) Stating the FTA as a general rule; (9) Nominalizing; (10) Going on record as incurring a debt or as not indebting hearer.

d. Off-record

Off-record strategy happens when the hearer is letting to interpret the meaning of the speaker's words during the face-threatening act (Mulyono et al., 2019). Off-record strategies separated into fifteen strategies as follows: (1) Giving hints; (2) Giving association clues; (3) Presupposing; (4) Understating; (5) Overstating; (6) Using tautologies; (7) Using contradictions; (8) Being ironic; (9) Using metaphors; (10) Using rhetorical questions; (11) Being ambiguous; (12) Being vague; (13) Over generalizing; (14) Displacing hearer; (15) Being incomplete, using ellipsis.

3. Method

The objective of this research is to investigate politeness strategies reflected in the dialogue in Indonesian English textbooks. The textbooks entitled *Talk Active 1* and *Talk Active 2: Language and Culture Programme* are chosen by the researcher as the sample of this research. There are some kinds of materials such as dialogue, kinds of text, and songs provided in the textbooks. But, the researcher limited the analysis of the dialogue as the object of this research. Dialogues in the textbooks can be used as an example of a communication situation. The example of the dialogues can be seen in the picture below:

Sources: Kurniawan & Ament, (2016); Kurniawan & Indriastuty, (2016) (Edited)

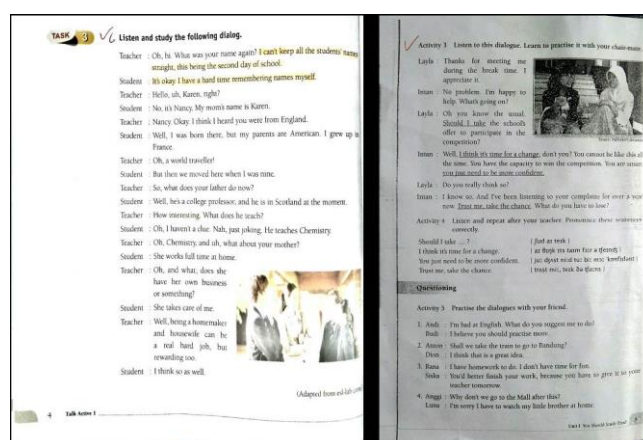


Figure 1. The example of dialogues in Indonesian English textbooks

This research followed content analysis proposed by Denscombe, (2010). There are six procedures in this research, they are:

- a. Choosing a suitable sample of text. In this step, the researcher read the textbooks and page by page and takes note of the expression which indicated the reflection of politeness strategies. The researcher repeats the reading section and note-taking in five times for different days.
- b. Breaking the text into component units. In this step, the researcher breaks text sentence by sentence and signing the words related to politeness strategies proposed by Brown & Levinson (1987).
- c. Categorizing the data. In this step, the researcher categorizes the data based on Brown & Levinson's (1987) politeness theory. The categories are the bald on-record strategy, positive politeness strategy, negative politeness strategy, and off-record strategy. After categorizing the data, the researcher requesting help from the researcher's advisors for data validation.
- d. Coding the data. In this step, the researcher makes a code for each data related to the categories of the data.
- e. Counting the frequencies of the data. The researcher counts the frequencies of each data based on their categories.
- f. Analyzing the data. In this step, the researcher analyzes the data based on their frequencies and links them to the theories and previous research to get any possibilities that can explain why the data occurred.

4. Findings and Discussion

Based on the data analysis, the dialogue in Indonesian English textbooks reflected four kinds of politeness strategies proposed by brown & Levinson's (1987) politeness strategies. They are bald on-record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off-record. The frequencies of the politeness strategies in Indonesian English textbooks can be described as follows:

Table 1. The Frequencies of Politeness Strategies

No	Politeness Strategies	Frequencies
1	Bald On-record	31
2	Positive Politeness	156
3	Negative Politeness	138
4	Off-record	11
Total		336

Table 1 above revealed that there are 366 politeness strategies in the dialogue in Indonesian English textbooks. The strategies consisted of 31 bald on-record strategies; 156 positive politeness strategies; 138 negative politeness strategies; and 11 off-record strategies. Additionally, the percentages of politeness strategies also have significant differences. It showed that the percentages of bald on-record strategies in Indonesian English textbooks are only 9%. The highest percentages are

positive politeness strategies with 47%, followed by negative politeness in 41%. The lowest strategies that revealed in the dialogue in Indonesian English textbooks are off-record strategies that have only 3% out of 100%. The detailed of the percentages can be seen in the chart below:

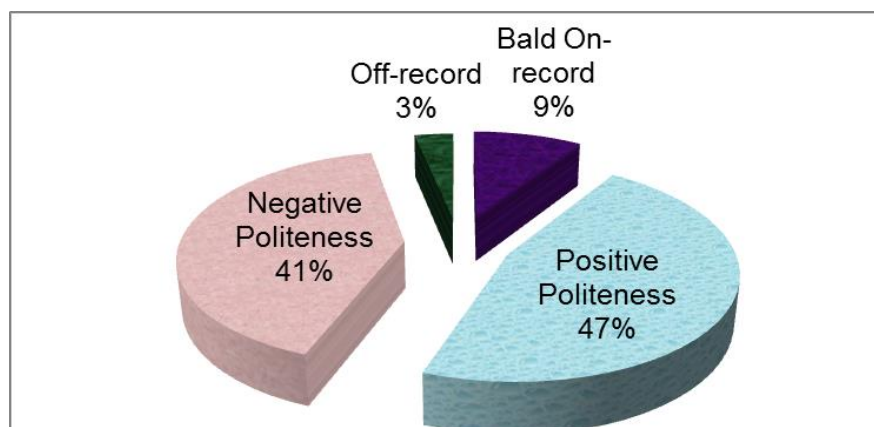


Figure 2. The Percentages of Politeness Strategies

Based on table 1 and figure 2, it can be concluded that positive and negative politeness is the dominant strategies in the dialogue in an Indonesian English textbook. It is quite acceptable because the issue of politeness strategies in the classroom context has been the concern in Indonesia. It proved by the research done by Erlinda & Rahmi, (2015) and Nurmawati, Haryanto, (2018). The used of politeness strategies which identically showing interest to others (Chen, 2017) also appropriate with the character of Indonesian society which popular with the friendliness. The used of negative politeness which intended to show respect and give deference (Mulyono et al., 2019) seems appropriate with the study done by Putri et al., (2019) which revealed that Indonesian students intend to use negative politeness to ask about sensitive issues in the classroom discussion. The Indonesian students also expecting their teacher used an expression of positive and negative politeness to make them feel more appreciated and encouraging (Agustina & Cahyono, 2016). The results of the present study seem related to the real situation in the ELT classroom for Indonesian context. Since the Indonesian students also used positive and negative politeness strategies in the classroom context (Mahmud, 2019). Moreover, the findings that showed four kinds of politeness strategies is reflected in Indonesian English textbooks also can relate with Gholami, (2015) and Shooshtari et al., (2017) which found similar things in the Iranian English textbook and ESP textbooks. It also in line with Alcoberes, (2016) who found negative politeness in Indonesian English textbooks. However, it also opposed Alcoberes, (2016) in case that politeness strategies which reflected in Indonesian English textbooks are not only negative politeness. There is also bald on-record, positive politeness, and off-record strategies in Indonesian English textbooks.

Additionally, the researcher intends to present the percentages of each type of politeness strategies proposed by Brown & Levinson (1987). First, the analysis discovered that 31 of bald on-record strategies in the dialogue in Indonesian English textbooks consisted of 45% case of FTA oriented bald-on record usage; and 55% case of non-minimization of the face threat. The percentages can be seen in the chart below:

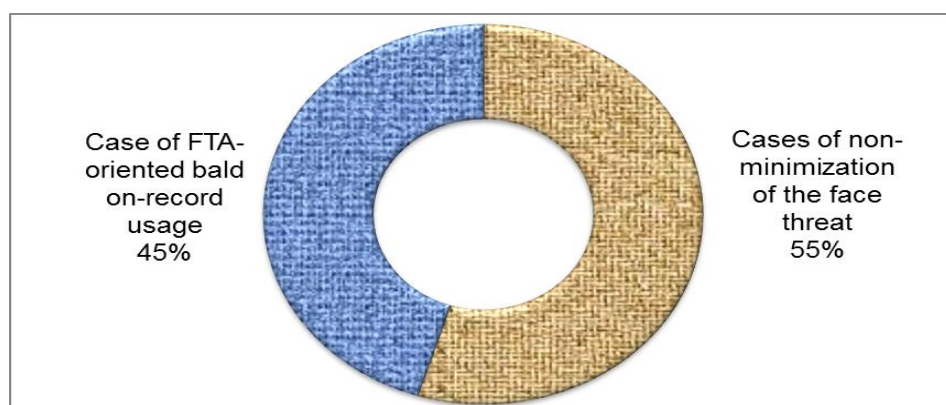


Figure 3. The Percentages of Bald On-record Strategies

The high number of the case of non-minimization in bald on-record strategies seem related to the Indonesian educational situation which familiar with task-oriented (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Sülü, 2015). The students accustomed with the imperatives such as *“read the text, write the text, listen the audio, open the page... or fill the blank”* during the learning process. Second, the analysis presented that 156 of positive politeness which reflected in the dialogue in Indonesian English textbooks consisted of 11 types of positive politeness strategies. The types and percentages are described in the chart below:

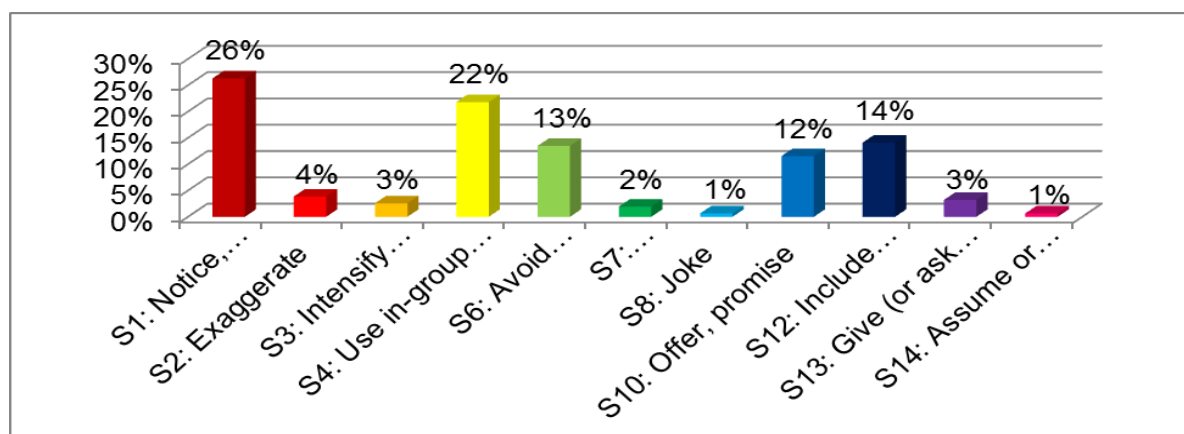


Figure 4. The Percentages of Positive Politeness's Types

Figure 4 showed that the dialogues in the Indonesian English textbooks reflected 11 types of positive politeness. So, from 156 positive politeness's reflected in the dialogues in Indonesian English textbooks, 26% of it is positive politeness strategy 1: Noticing, attending to the hearer. Besides, 4% of positive politeness strategy 2: exaggerating; 3% of strategy 3: intensifying interest to the hearer; and 22% of strategy 4: using in-group identity marker. Moreover, it is also containing 13% strategy 6: avoiding disagreement; 2% of strategy 7: raising common ground; 1% of strategy 8: joking; 12% of strategy 10: offering, promising; 14% of strategy 12: including speaker and hearer in the activity; 3% of strategy 13: giving or asking for reason; and 1% of strategy 14: assuming reciprocity. The results have a little different with the realization in the classroom context. The teachers used positive politeness strategy 5 to interact with the students in the classroom (Erlinda & Rahmi, 2015),

while the dialogues in the textbooks are not reflected positive politeness strategy 5. Then the dialogues also reflected one strategy that was not revealed in the Erlinda & Rahmi's (2015) and Nurmawati, Haryanto's (2018) research, it is positive politeness strategy 8: joking. The high number percentages of strategy 1 are related to the expectation of the students to be more appreciated by their teachers (Agustina & Cahyono, 2016). It may the dialogues that learned in the textbooks influence the students in their daily life.

Furthermore, the percentages of the types of negative politeness in the dialogues in Indonesian English textbooks are presented below:

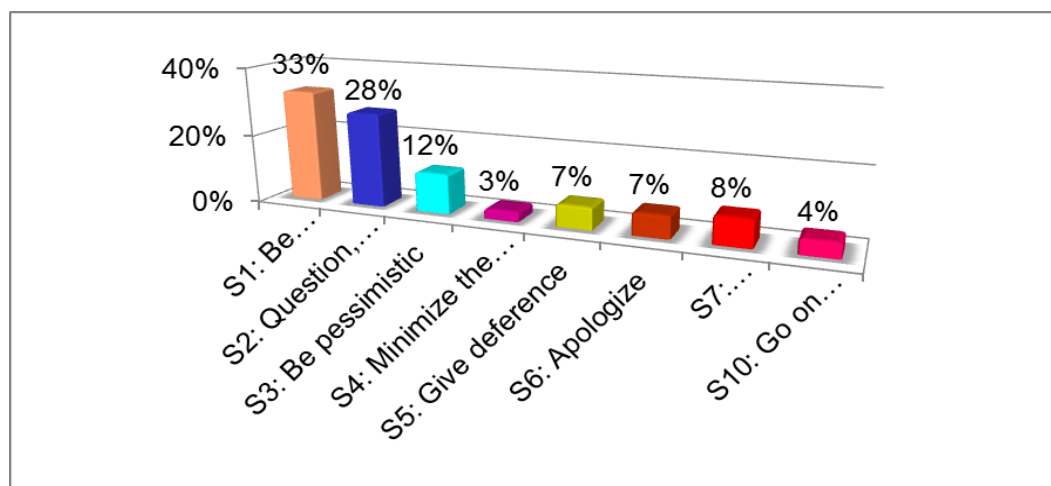


Figure 5. The Percentages of Negative Politeness's Types

Figure 5 showed that from 138 negative politeness strategies in the dialogues in Indonesian English textbooks consisted of 8 strategies with different percentages. The strategies are strategy 1 at 33%; strategy 2 at 28%; strategy 3 at 12%; strategy 4 at 3%; strategy 5 at 6%; strategy 6 at 6%; strategy 7 at 8%; and strategy 10 at 4%. The highest percentages number of strategy 1 showed relevance with the student's social behaviour where indirectness is likely being a culture in Indonesia. Indirectness is usually used in formal and informal communication, whether the interlocutors have equal power relation or high-low power. It showed by the research of Agustina & Cahyono, (2016) which revealed that the students expect their lecture to use the expression "*please*" in the classroom interactions to make them more encouraging during the learning process. Whereas, the expression "*please*" which expected by the students is a part of negative politeness strategy 1: being conventionally indirect. Besides, the students also expected the use or expression "*sorry*" during the classroom interaction where it was a part of negative politeness strategy 6: apologizing. Unfortunately, the dialogues in the Indonesian English textbooks only reflected 6% of strategy 6. It may a little different wit Indonesian culture where apologizing is often used in daily life.

Lastly, here are the percentages of off-record strategies which reflected in the dialogues in Indonesian English textbooks:

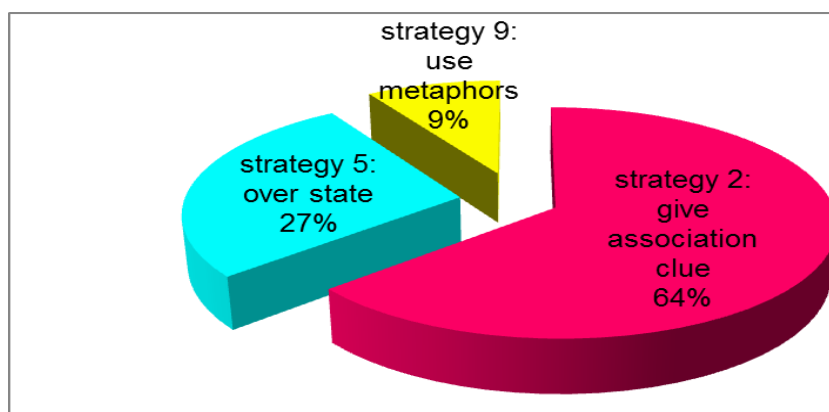


Figure 6. The Percentages of Off-record's Types

Based on Table 1, there are 8 off-record strategies in the dialogues in Indonesian English textbooks. The Figure 6 showed that the eighth strategies contained three types of off-record strategies, they are 64% of off-record strategy 2: giving association clue; 27% of off-record strategy 5: overstating; and 9% off-record strategy 9: using metaphors. The highest percentages number of off-record strategy 2 may be related to Indonesian culture society which familiar with indirectness. So, the writers reflected strategy 2 more than other off-record strategies. Because the students seem familiar with that kind of situations in their daily life.

5. Conclusion

The analysis data revealed that four kinds of politeness strategies emerged by Bron & Levinson (1987) reflected in the dialogues in Indonesian English textbooks. They are bald on-record strategies, positive politeness strategies, negative politeness strategies, and off-record strategies. The strategies are reflected in significant differences. The analysis showed that positive politeness strategies have the highest frequencies. Then, followed by negative politeness strategies in number 2. Bald on-record strategies are number three even though the differences of the frequencies are too far with positive and negative politeness. And, off-record strategies are in the last place with a few frequencies. However, it proved that Indonesian English textbooks have pragmatics input for the students.

Despite positive and negative politeness are the most dominant strategies which reflected in the dialogues of the textbooks, it does not mean all of the types of positive and negative politeness are reflected through the dialogues in Indonesian English textbooks. The analysis revealed that there are only 11 types of positive politeness that reflected in the dialogues of the textbooks. The strategies are strategy 1, strategy 2, strategy 3, strategy 4, strategy 6, strategy 7 strategy 8, strategy 10, strategy 12, strategy 13, and strategy 14. Besides, negative politeness strategies that revealed in the dialogues of the textbooks also only have 8 types. The strategies are negative politeness strategy 1, strategy 2, strategy 3. Strategy 4, strategy 5, strategy 6, strategy 7 and strategy 8.

Although bald on-record strategies have a little frequency, both of bald on record's types, case of FTA oriented bald-on record usage and the case of non-minimization of the face threat, are reflected in the dialogues of the textbooks. Then, from fifteen types of off-record strategies, there are only 3 types of off-record

strategies which presented in dialogues of the textbooks. They are off-record strategy 2, strategy 5, and strategy 9.

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